

My name is John Williams, I was a police officer between 18th August 1975 and 17th August 2006 serving for 30 years. During this period I served with the South East Regional Crime Squad between 1985 and 1992. During my period with the Regional Crime Squad, I was a member of the squad that arrested Peter Risdon in connection with a rough diamond that had been brought to London from South Africa. I was also a part of Operation Athene, the name for the investigation that led to the arrests of Darius Guppy and others for insurance fraud. I am therefore, aware of the important features of both cases.

Peter Risdon was arrested by myself and others in a bank in Marble Arch, using a false passport as identification while requesting that the bank hand to him an envelope that had been placed with them for safe keeping. In his first and all subsequent interviews he gave full statements and replied to all questions asked of him, even though at that time the right to silence had not been modified and most people did at that time rely on it when arrested.

He said he was involved in a completely legal business transaction, that he was selling the diamond on behalf of its owner, at the request of its owner. He showed a page of signatures that had been faxed to him by the diamond's owner, the person he was impersonating in the bank, in order that he be better able to get possession of the diamond, and he identified the buyer who confirmed Mr Risdon's statement. He was charged with two counts of uttering a false instrument, and released on bail after a financial security had been paid into the court.

He made no statements that incriminated the South Africans involved in any wrongdoing. I am aware that two of my colleagues travelled to South Africa and conducted a series of interviews in which all possibilities were explored, as is usual. One of these possibilities was that an insurance fraud had been planned but no evidence to this effect was found and no charges of attempted fraud were laid against any person.

Shortly after his arrest, Mr Risdon approached myself and my partner, saying he had a friend who had been involved in a serious crime and wished to approach the police, but was nervous of doing so. We then held a series of meetings with Mr Risdon, mainly in pubs, during which this was discussed. In order to meet Mr Risdon under these circumstances, we were obliged to register him as an informant and to log our contacts with him. Police officers are obliged to do this with anyone they arrange to meet if that person is or might be involved in a crime. This is an anti-corruption measure. Obviously, we suspected that Mr Risdon's "friend" might be Mr Risdon himself. No other implications should be read into the fact that Mr Risdon was a registered informant. I can confirm that the only arrests that were

made on the basis of information supplied by Mr Risdon were those of Mr Guppy and his associates.

During the meetings with Mr Risdon, he tried to establish whether there was any way that his "friend" could give evidence without fear of prosecution. We told him there was not, although the fact that he had come forward would be taken into consideration by a court. Eventually, and with no assurances or deals whatsoever, Mr Risdon made a statement about his involvement with the insurance fraud Mr Guppy had committed after a faked robbery in New York.

Mr Risdon was then offered a deal concerning the charges he was facing. He was told that if he entered a guilty plea, the judge would be passed a letter explaining the help he had given over the Guppy affair, and that this would reduce the sentence. He refused, saying he was not guilty of the charges and would not therefore plead guilty.

When he came to trial, after the prosecution case had been outlined, at "half time", the judge held Mr Risdon had no case to answer and instructed the jury to bring in a verdict of not guilty. Mr Risdon did not even have to enter a defense. Mr Guppy is very well aware of this, because his solicitors had an observer present throughout Mr Risdon's trial.

I understand that Mr Risdon came forward as he did to give evidence against Mr Guppy because he believed that Mr Guppy had deliberately framed him for carrying out an actual robbery in New York. Certainly, when Mr Risdon was flown to New York to help with the police enquiry into Mr Guppy, he was recognised at first sight by one of the New York detectives in the case purely because the detective, Ray Burke, had seen an artist's impression of one of the robbers that was given to the police by Mr Guppy in the immediate aftermath of the faked robbery and recognised the man in the picture as Mr Risdon.

The New York police department maintained to me that they had never believed Guppy's story and that they had been angry when the insurance company had paid out and the investigation was halted.

Mr Risdon never faced any charges over the Guppy affair, did not give evidence on the basis of any kind of deal and most particularly did not turn "Queen's Evidence" in the case.

One of the lines of defense put forward by Guppy in court was that he was actually robbed by Mr Risdon and others.

Guppy had claimed he was robbed by three men and gave descriptions of them all, on the strength of which three artists impressions were

produced.

Guppy had also been carrying out a VAT fraud which was investigated by H M Customs. He had been smuggling gold in India and reclaiming the VAT on the purchases he had made in the U.K.. Several of his smuggled shipments were intercepted by the Indian authorities, several people were arrested in India because of this, one of them gave evidence against Guppy at his trial and he was sentenced both for the insurance fraud and the VAT fraud at the same time.

This information is all in the public record.

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